

Pursuit of the Truth

#Chapter 11 — Blood Boiling - Read Pursuit of the Truth

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"I might as well try everything!" Su Ming grit his teeth and threw the flower with six petals into the stone caldron.

The herb with six petals was the one he found from the mud. It was the one that gave off a scent that seemed to make the blood boil.

The moment the herb touched the medicinal concoction in the caldron, Su Ming saw a red, alluring light from within it. He did not cover the caldron with a lid, but chose to step forward and walk around the caldron. He selected a few of the ravines that still had the liquid fire flowing down like a stream and jammed the horn horizontally in their paths to stop the flow temporarily, making it easier for him to control the fire.

The ravines on the ground have increased since a month ago, and most of them were covered in horizontal marks that looked like scars. This was a method Su Ming invented to control the fire after a month of trial and error.

Su Ming was incredibly nervous. Almost all of his attention was on the Barren Caldron he made. According to his observations in the past month, the place he was standing was safe for the next hour, so he did not need to care about anything else.

Time passed by, and as soon as the hour was up, Su Ming immediately retreated from the place. Not long after he left the place, a huge blast of fire erupted from the ground.

As the fire continued bursting forth, Su Ming was also sweating like a river as he stood not too far away from the source of the fire. But he kept his gaze on the caldron. From the experience he had accumulated a month ago, he knew that there was still fourteen to eighteen hours left before he could see the results.

During this time, he would need to adjust the strength of the flames according to the changes with the medicinal concoction, and he especially needed to put the lid on the caldron at the final moments of making the medicine pills so that the heat within the caldron will increase to incredible levels and the heat will gather to create the medicinal pills.

He had been repeating this act numerous times in the past month. It could even be said that he was already used to it by now.

Two hours, four hours passed by. Slowly, the caldron started letting out a red mist. The mist had no smell, but as the strange light shone, it made Su Ming's blood boil when he looked at it.

During this time, he adjusted the strength of the fire a few times, and he did so until it turned dark outside. Su Ming's eyes were red and bloodshot. He had used almost the entire day on creating the medicinal pills, and if everything had been working well so far, then there was only one final step left.

Through the red mist, Su Ming could see that there was not much liquid left within the caldron, and it was bubbling inside. When each bubble burst, the red mist would rise from within.

"It's almost done!" After numerous failures, Su Ming's eyes lit up. Without any hesitation, he grabbed the lid by his side and covered the caldron.

The moment he closed the caldron, a low rumbling sound could be heard echoing within the cave.

"It all depends on luck now." Once he covered the caldron, Su Ming let out a huge breath and retreated a few steps before sitting down with his legs crossed. He closed his eyes and rested. He knew that he had done everything that he could, and success depended entirely on luck now.

Two hours went by. The roaring sound from within the caldron increased exponentially and continued nine times before it gradually became quiet. There was no longer any sound beside the fire underneath the caldron.

Su Ming did not open his eyes but chose instead to continue resting and wait. It was not until the brief period of time when the next eruption was about to start and when the fire underneath the caldron began growing weaker that Su Ming opened his eyes and grabbed some heat resistant herbs in his right hand before moving forward and pushing the lid on the caldron away.

The moment the lid was opened, a red wave of heat rushed into his face, but Su Ming was already prepared. The instant he opened the lid, he moved backwards.

He waited until the red wave of heat dispersed then with his heart beating in trepidation and excitement, he moved forward slowly and looked into the caldron.

With just a glance, Su Ming began laughing loudly.

Right at the very bottom of the caldron were three red medicinal pills!

He retrieved the pills carefully, then sat by the side in excitement as he kept looking at the very mysterious object he had only seen in his memories.

Su Ming loved the little round pills, and he even brought them to his nose to smell them. But instead of a medicinal scent, they emitted a faint stench of blood.

The pill was also abnormally fragile. If Su Ming used a bit more strength, the pills would crumble into dust. But Su Ming did not care much about that.

"One month has gone by, and I've finally managed to make it once!" The more Su Ming looked at it, the happier he was, and as he was about to pop one into his mouth, he hesitated.

Su Ming forcefully quelled his excitement. In his mind, he saw the odd scene when he was picking the red herb with six petals.

"If this herb was the key to creating these pills, then I wonder whether the other one can do it as well..." Su Ming placed the three pills at a safe location, then took out the red herb with five petals.

There was a moment of silence before Su Ming made up his mind. Once he took note of the time, he closed his eyes and meditated, he started moving the blood in his veins all over his body to recover from fatigue.

The little monkey returned at midnight, and as it climbed into the cave its face was seemingly intoxicated as it sniffed its right claw. It did not bother Su Ming, but chose to lie down in a place that was not too hot.

It had already gotten used to this place over the past month.

Yet even though it was lying down, it still kept sniffing at its right claw, the intoxicated look becoming more visible on its face. It started cackling as it remembered something.

It was not until the next morning before Su Ming opened his eyes and moved his body. The fatigue he felt on the previous day was completely gone.

With his stamina recovered and almost overflowing, Su Ming took the herb with five petals and continued with the quenching process.

After a few days, Su Ming stepped out of the fire cavern as he had not left for quite a few days. When he saw the sun, he felt its glare on his eyes. He was already used to the red glare of the fires within the fire cave, and now that he looked once more at the brightness from the sun, he was a little unused to it.

As he stood there breathing in fresh air, Su Ming waited for his eyes to adjust to the brightness of the sun, then carefully surveyed his surroundings before climbing down.

He was quick as he did so, and he remained alert of his surroundings. With the little monkey keeping watch as well, they did not encounter any dangers and made it down the mountain safely.

They found a river that let out hot steam at the feet of the mountain. Su Ming took off his clothes and soaked himself in the water, feeling the fatigue that had accumulated in his body disappearing.

He and Xiao Hong hurriedly left the river reluctantly. He had much more important things to do.

Su Ming and Xiao Hong travelled with blinding speed in the forest. After covering some distance, Su Ming caught some terrifying looking beasts in his hands.

There were also some in the little monkey's claws.

At a slightly more remote corner in the forest, Su Ming took a glance at the four tied-up beasts roaring at him, then ignored them and took out two small bottles from his bosom.

Within the two bottles were two types of pills. One of them was red and slightly terrifying to look at, while the other was green, with a faint medicinal smell travelling to his nostrils. With just a whiff, he felt refreshed.

The green pill was the one Su Ming made a few days ago using the herb with five petals.

"The Scattering Dust... If I follow my instincts, then the green one is the Scattering Dust, then what on earth is the red pill?" Su Ming narrowed his eyes. There were three pills each in the bottles. He took one of each out and looked at the beasts before moving towards them.

Once he fed the two pills to two different beasts, Su Ming retreated a few steps back and observed them nervously. Even the little monkey was affected by his mood and grew nervous.

He waited for a long time, but there were no changes within the two beasts that consumed the pills. They were still hissing and roaring at Su Ming, their faces contorted in rage.

Su Ming frowned. He waited for a bit longer, but nothing happened.

"How could this be? Logically speaking, something must have happened... But at least it's not poisonous. Could it be... this isn't to be consumed, but to be used externally?" Once Su Ming got the idea, he took out the horn and went to the other two beasts that did not take the medicine, then cut open two small wounds on their bodies so that blood flowed out.

The little monkey quickly followed behind him to watch.

Su Ming then took another two pills from the bottle and placed it on their wounds.

At that moment, something happened!

The moment the red pill touched the wound on the creature's body, within just a few seconds, its entire body started trembling furiously and it turned into a pool of blood. Before the blood could even fall onto the ground, it burst into flames and turned into red mist. The little beast did not even have time to scream.

All of this happened in an instant, and it happened so quickly Su Ming let out a cry of alarm before retreating quickly. The little monkey was also shocked and let out whimpers of alarm as it retreated hastily.

"This is..." Su Ming took in a sharp breath, his eyes filled with terror. He did not expect that the red pill he made would have such shocking effects!

When the red mist disappeared in the air, there was only a pile of purplish red bones left on the ground. A terrifying sight to behold. The other creatures, while they were very close to the beast just now, were not affected, but it was clear that they were frightened by it.

Su Ming's breathing was erratic and quick. After a long while, he looked at the bottle containing the red pill. There was only one left, but that pill alone was enough to make him think that it was a bloodthirsty item.

"There are no effects if it was consumed, but if it comes into contact with blood, then death is assured! Since I was the one who made this, then it will be named Scattering Blood!" Su Ming murmured. He forced his fears to go away and put away the pill carefully. He had a feeling that this object could very well be used as a weapon in the future!

"Then this green pill should be the real Scattering Dust. Just what are the effects though?" Su Ming fell momentarily silent, then his gaze fell upon the little beast that was still completely fine even though the pill had melted into its wound.

Chapter 12: Su Ming's Wrath

Su Ming thought for a long time but he still could not figure out the effects of the Scattering Dust. In the memories he obtained, he only acquired the methods to make the pills, not their effects.

Su Ming only left the place with the slightest bit of hesitation when the sun was at its highest in the sky.

They ran back to the place where he had performed the quenching. The little monkey did not stay long. It ran outside as soon as it came back to the cave.

Su Ming felt the breeze on his skin as he leaned against the wall of the mountain. In his hands were the green pills and he began thinking as he held them.

‘Just what is its use...? Neither consuming the pill nor applying it externally worked...’

He frowned. He finally managed to make the pills but he could not determine their effects. It made Su Ming feel as if the past month had been a waste.

He stared at the pills and made his decision.

‘I’ll just have to try it on my own! Let’s see what happens once I swallow it!’

Su Ming was the decisive sort. Once he made a decision, he never hesitated. He quickly placed the Scattering Dust in his hand, into his mouth.

The pill immediately melted once it touched his tongue. A strong medicinal taste filled his mouth and turned into a strong wave of heat that flowed into all parts of his body. It disappeared soon however, and Su Ming did not feel much from it.

Su Ming was stunned. He sat down hurriedly and meditated, trying to solidify the blood in his veins. However, it was to no avail. It was no different than before. He still felt that there was not enough blood in his body.

He pulled at his hair, frustrated. This was the first time he truly felt that he had wasted the past month.

‘Impossible, there must be some other use!’

Su Ming was disappointed but he did not give up. Yet, no matter how much he pondered about it, he could not find any clues. The only thing he could do was sigh and laugh bitterly.

After a while, the little monkey returned and approached Su Ming. It jumped around for a while before throwing some fruits in front of him, then leaving once more.

Su Ming sighed. He was hungry so, he picked up one of the fruits and began thinking as he ate.

‘One, two, three...’

Before he knew it, Su Ming let out a burp and spat out the core. He stroked his belly and started thinking again. His gaze traveled to the fruits left on the ground and just as he was about to look away, it struck him.

'I'm full?! What?!'

Su Ming stared at the fruits and immediately began counting the cores he spat on the ground. There were 15 in total.

He felt that he had just come across something important. His heart pounded in excitement.

'I've always loved eating this fruit and Xiao Hong has always picked them for me...but I don't like eating too much in one go. At the same time, I'm usually only half full even after eating 10 of them... But just now, I only ate 15 of them and I'm already full! Is it because my appetite has decreased? Or perhaps...it has something to do with this!'

Su Ming licked his lips. He remembered that he had taken a Scattering Dust pill earlier on.

'Perhaps the Scattering Dust is actually a pill that can replace food... Or perhaps, the Scattering Dust can... increase the effects of other things!'

Su Ming felt his heart pounding. He took a deep breath. He had been thinking carefully and exhaustively about the effects of the pill but had obtained no clues. Now that he had stumbled onto something, he was going to pursue it no matter how ridiculous it may seem. He immediately crawled back into the little hole which he used for the sole purpose of quenching herbs.

He remembered that he still had a little bit of Dark Dragon's Saliva left. This was a rare item. It was impossible to obtain it without rain and he had been reluctant to drink what little amount he had left.

He quickly ventured into the cave. Su Ming took out the bottle that contained the few drops of Dark Dragon's Saliva left from the basket. He then swallowed it all in one gulp without hesitation.

Su Ming was extremely familiar with the Dark Dragon's Saliva. With just a few drops, he immediately felt the faint traces of coldness from the liquid traveling to all parts of his body before seeping into his blood.

The cold sensation brought upon by the Dark Dragon's Saliva suddenly increased a little, at least by one fold. It may not seem much, but Su Ming could really feel it.

As the coldness became one with his blood, it felt like his blood started to boil. It caused the four manifested to glow a bloody red. as he controlled the flow of blood in his body.

After a long while, Su Ming opened his eyes and let out a shaky breath. His eyes were filled with happiness and excitement.

'I knew it! There are no effects if the Scattering Dust is taken alone but if taken with other objects, then the effects of those objects will increase. It seems like a simple effect, but it's really quite extraordinary!'

Su Ming felt his spirits lift up. The process of creating Scattering Dust was now a huge motivation for him.

'There were 15 tiny holes on the door which gave me the methods to create Scattering Dust. It must be for me to place 15 of these pills in there but, I don't even have enough for myself now...'

Su Ming fell silent. Then, he let out a string of murmurs slowly after a brief period of hesitation.

Once he made up his mind, he immediately went to the Barren Caldron and began processing the remaining herbs by quenching.

Besides processing the herbs, he also made the little monkey continue searching for the herbs his grandfather would take away in huge bundles. Then using the method in his tribe, he mashed the herbs and turned them into liquid before drinking it. With the help of the Scattering Dust, his training speed grew faster.

Two months had passed by. Su Ming barely left the cave during those two months. The fire cavern had practically become his second home. The location could not be easily discovered, hence, Su Ming felt at ease training there.

Within those two months, he had prepared a lot of Scattering Dust. With the help of the medicinal concoction which helped increase his blood rate, he gradually managed to manifest the fifth blood vein on his body.

The sixth blood vein too, had begun appearing vaguely on his body. If this continued, then it would manifest very soon.

Winter had already arrived outside. The other mountains were covered by snow except Black Flame Mountain. Snow would melt before it could even touch the surface of the mountain. Due to this, the mountain was surrounded by a thick layer of fog. It was a strange sight to see from afar.

If an outsider saw it for the first time, the mountain would definitely pique his or her interest. Su Ming grew up there so, the strange sights of the mountain were nothing new to him.

That day, Su Ming sat down with his legs crossed and the blood red glow was incredibly strong within his body. The five blood veins crawled all over his body as if they possessed life. It was a shocking sight to behold.

As the blood red glow kept spreading around his body, sweat accumulated all over Su Ming's body. His body trembled but his face was filled with determination. This was his third attempt at manifesting the sixth blood vein during the past half a month. Once he managed to do it, he would successfully become a Berserker at the second level in the Blood Solidification Realm.

More importantly, he would be able to use the very first Berserker Art. It was one that belonged only to their tribe; an Art known as Spirit Devourer!

The Spirit Devourer was not a skill that could be used without preparation. Some fresh animal carcasses would be required. By gathering the Berserker Blood in their bodies, practitioners could sense the spirit of the deceased animal and bring it out to increase their own strength temporarily.

Only after they have mastered this particular skill would they be known as a Berserker. They would then be different from the other members of the tribe. They would be much stronger.

After a long while, Su Ming's body continued to tremble. The bloody glow surrounding his body gradually disappeared and the five blood veins on his skin also sank into his body once more. The solidification of the sixth blood vein had failed once again.

Su Ming let out a deep breath. After a moment of silence, he mixed some medicinal concoction with the Scattering Dust and drank it before continuing with his training.

Another month passed by. The entire Dark Dragon Mountain was covered by a thick layer of snow. The fog surrounding Black Flame Mountain had also grown thicker. Even the heat seemed to disappear in the weather.

The year's coldest season was about to arrive.

However for Su Ming, this was the most important moment. His diligence in training coupled with his supply of herbs and Scattering Dust, increased his training speed exponentially in the Blood Solidification Realm. The sixth blood vein had appeared and it was at a critical moment of manifestation.

The little monkey also refused to go out in winter. Its entire body was red and that made it extremely eye-catching in the snow. Even if it was not winter, it would have to lay low.

It squatted down beside Su Ming and yawned as it watched him. All of a sudden, the little monkey lifted its head,. Its eyes were filled with a fierce glare and its ears twitched.

Faint voices traveled into the cavern from the outside...

"Yu Chi, are you sure the Sky Stone grows here? We've been searching this place for half a day and we still can't find any. Are you sure you got the right information?" It was a cold voice and the little monkey quivered the moment it heard it.

"It can't be. I remember seeing shrubs of the plant, that's why I cast a Berserker Art to hide it. It should have grown by now. The other members of the tribe come here often to collect herbs. They should be able to identify my spells." The voice that answered was sharp.

"Then hurry up. If the Sky Stone is really here, then I'll be able to break through the third level soon and reach the fourth level. As for you, you should be able to reach the third level."

"Don't be in such a hurry. It should be here. I can feel the presence of my spell... If you can reach the fourth level, then you will be able to join the Black Mountain's hunting team. I heard that the elder made a new rule that says anyone can keep their own game this time."

Their voices were getting closer and sounded like they were right outside. The little monkey was so nervous it did not dare to breathe. It could feel that the two people outside posed a serious threat.

It turned back to look at Su Ming multiple times but Su Ming still had his eyes shut. His body was trembling slightly and the bloody glow on his body was becoming stronger. The sixth blood vein seemed to show signs of complete manifestation as well.

Yet, at that very moment... "Found it! Huh? Look, there's a small hole here!"

"It's the Sky Stone! As for the hole...this was once the Land of the Fire Berserker Tribe. There's hot air around the hole. It should be empty. Since we're already here, we might as well go in and have a look. A simple hole can't stop me." Their voices traveled into the cave and their words made the little monkey's face grow pale.

It gritted its teeth and looked back at Su Ming for a long period of time. Then, it bared its teeth and rushed out of the little hole.

Immediately, sounds of delight could be heard from the outside.

"It's a Fire Ape and a baby at that, haha!"

"This must be its refuge from the cold. Catch it! Its blood can help me replenish my blood, and I'll offer its fur to the elder!"

Mournful cries could be heard after that and then the voices gradually disappeared. However within the cave, Su Ming's face had contorted in anger and he shook furiously.

"You asked...for this..." Su Ming lifted his head and roared in rage.

Chapter 13: Killing Motive!

The moment Su Ming lifted his head, his eyes were bloodshot. His entire body glowed madly with a blood red light and it lit the entire fire cavern.

His entire body kept trembling. As the blood moved around his body, his heart pounded faster and faster as if it was going to break his chest. It only served to make his face even more twisted.

He was at an important moment in his training so, he was unable to stop abruptly. Nonetheless, he knew and clearly heard everything that had happened earlier.

He saw with his own eyes, the little monkey running out to lure the two outsiders to protect him.

Su Ming had never been that mad before. The little monkey was his only friend in the forest. Over the years, he had come to treat the little one like family. The madness within his eyes caused the veins from Su Ming's body to pop out and blazing sounds to reverberate throughout his body.

The five blood veins that manifested on his body were now giving off a piercing glow. Within the red glow was the sixth blood vein which was on the verge of completely manifesting itself. It looked like it was on the verge of breaking out of its cocoon.

"This damned second level!" Su Ming roared. He had been gentle in his previous attempts. Even if he did not make it, there were no serious repercussions.

However, the little monkey's life was now in danger and Su Ming grew more anxious with every passing second. He gave everything he had and controlled the blood in his veins, forcing them to move in the way they should as a Berserker Practitioner. He focused all of his blood towards the sixth blood vein.

There was a loud boom and Su Ming coughed up blood. His entire body trembled as his face turned pale. Such a reckless move was taboo for Berserker Practitioners. It was important for them to arrive at each new rank smoothly and steadily. They could not march forward recklessly.

The booming sound was not as loud to the outside world but Su Ming felt like the world had crashed in his head. The sound kept echoing itself.

‘Damn it!’

Su Ming glared at the entrance to the cave. It was as if he could still see the little monkey’s helplessness, fear and resolution.

There was no time for hesitation. Su Ming once again controlled the blood in his entire body and attempted to break through for the second time!

More blood came out of his mouth and trickled down his chin onto the floor...

The third time... fourth time... fifth time!

During his fifth attempt, Su Ming coughed out a huge mouthful of blood. His face became completely ashen but on his face was also a strong intent to kill. With all that blood, Su Ming looked horrifying.

He immediately picked himself up and the moment he stood up, there was a loud bang within his body. The sixth blood vein had completely manifested itself.

As the sixth blood vein formed completely, a totally different aura compared to the first level of the Blood Solidification Realm erupted from within Su Ming’s body. There was no wind but the aura blew his hair and the sixth blood vein moved rapidly on his skin as if it was alive!

It was the second level of the Blood Solidification Realm!

Without waiting for his body to get used to the second level, Su Ming ran at a speed faster than he previously could by one fold. He grabbed a bow and horn by the side and in a blink of an eye, he disappeared.

He quickly crawled out of the small hole. When he arrived outside, it was snowing heavily and the sun was about to set. It was already dusk outside.

‘One of them is a second level in the Blood solidification Realm...the other in the third level...’

Su Ming’s eyes were bloodshot and cold. No matter how strong his enemies were, Su Ming felt no fear. He only felt a strong urge to kill!

He had already forgotten what fear felt like. The moment the little monkey was captured, the two Berserkers from Black Mountain Tribe became his mortal enemies.

Su Ming would have to be dead if they did not die by his hands!

It did not matter if he was rushing into fire. It had nothing to do with recklessness. Instead, it was a matter of survival! If the fire did not cease to burn, he would be burnt to ashes.

Su Ming did not hesitate. He ran forward at full speed. He was a member of the Berserker Tribe. He had been playing and collecting herbs around the mountains since he was young. He was familiar with these parts of the land and was even better at tracking for answers around the place.

As he ran, he kept his eyes on the ground. He wiped the blood away from the corners of his mouth and his hands. After a while, he saw some messy-looking tracks on the dried leaves ahead. He grabbed some broken twigs and looked at them. The killing intent in his eyes grew even stronger. He threw away the twigs and changed his direction.

Su Ming continued to run at full speed and maximized his body's full potential. On the way, he found a lot other traces and even a pool of blood.

There were some traces of red fur in the pool of blood. It was the little monkey's!

However the blood was already beginning to dry up, a clear sign that the two people caught the little monkey there and had left for quite some time.

'I can't catch up...'

Su Ming's eyes darkened. He clenched his fists, his eyes filled with anger.

'They're from the Black Mountain Tribe, so surely they'll return to their tribe...If that's the case...there's still a shortcut from here to the Black Mountain Tribe!'

Su Ming turned around and leapt forward, lithely disappearing into the snow covered forest.

'Faster!'

Su Ming ran ahead quickly like he was flying through the forest. Yet, he still felt his speed was too slow. As he traveled, he left his footprints on the snow. Just as he was about to take another leap forward, the snow before him flew up from the ground.

A small creature that looked like a fox but was entirely covered in white fur and had the horns of a deer leapt from the snow. Its speed was so quick it almost reached Su Ming in an instant.

'Mink raccoon!'

Su Ming did not slow down. When the little creature jumped out from its hiding place, he swung his right fist towards it.

Previously, Su Ming's strength would not have been enough to kill a wild beast with just one punch. However, he was now a Berserker in the second level of the Blood Solidification Realm. He already had six blood veins manifested and he was controlled by an almost boundless amount of blood lust. This caused not just his speed but also his strength to increase exponentially.

The punch landed squarely on the mink raccoon's body and it let out a cry. It narrowed its eyes, wanting to change its course midair but Su Ming rushed forward and cut the creature apart with the horn in his left hand. He had equipped himself with it sometime during the encounter.

Fresh blood poured out of its wounds. The little creature struggled and cried in the snow. Its blood stained the snow a bloody shade of crimson.

It was a clean cut. Su Ming looked at the dead mink raccoon and lowered his body. He raised his right hand as he took in a deep breath. After that, he began controlling his blood. His body emitted a red light as if it had fused together with the blood on the ground. The six blood veins manifested themselves on Su Ming's body.

He placed his right hand slowly on the dead creature and a strange glow appeared in his eyes. One of the blood veins on his body began to twist around oddly as if it came to life. It crawled along his right arm to his palm and into the little creature's body.

Suddenly, the dead carcass began shaking. Its fur fell off and its body began withering rapidly. Within the blink of an eye, it turned into bones. At the same moment, wisps of white mist rose from its body to create an image of its former self. But it was a vague image, like it would disappear as soon as the wind blew.

This was the first time Su Ming had cast the Spirit Devourer. According to the information he obtained about the spell, he would usually need to refine the spirit first before devouring it. However Su Ming did not have the time. He opened his mouth and breathed in the spirit form of the mink raccoon.

Su Ming's body trembled. He could feel that he had just obtained additional strength but it was also rapidly disappearing. It would not be long before it disappeared completely and his strength would return to normal.

Su Ming did not linger. He immediately rushed forth. This time, his speed was slightly faster than before and it was increasing. He became more and more like the wind.

As the wind blew past his ears, there was only one thought in Su Ming's head. He had to catch up to the other party, stop them and then save the little monkey.

As for the method, he was not a reckless person to begin with so, he already had a plan.

An hour later, the additional strength Su Ming obtained disappeared but it allowed him to cover more distance. He had already left Black Flame Mountain and was near the Black Mountain Tribe.

He was at a small hill which looked like a slope. If he stood there, he could see quite far ahead and his peripheral vision would also increase.

As he was near his destination, Su Ming's eyes became fierce. He kept his gaze on Black Flame Mountain and very soon, he saw his targets. Two figures appeared and one of them was holding onto a motionless Xiao Hong!

Su Ming stood there and took out a small bottle with his right hand. There was a red pill within the bottle. Once he made sure there was no fresh blood on his hands, Su Ming took the pill out and held it in his hand.

The pill was his trump card!

He stabilized his breathing and took out his bow. His eyes were calm, almost like dead water. The two people were approaching him, with only a few miles between them. They would have seen him if they paid attention.

The two people were big and burly. They looked strong. The man holding onto the little monkey was only wearing a thin piece of hide even though it was winter. His upper body was bare. There was white mist coming off his body as if he was dispersing the cold with the energy emitted from his blood.

Su Ming only cast him a glance before focusing on the other person. He was also big in build with several long spears slung over his back. He was slightly shorter than his companion. However, Su Ming could feel that his Qi was much stronger than his companion and much stronger than his own.

This person was powerful.

Su Ming narrowed his eyes and lifted his bow before pointing it towards the second man.

Just as Su Ming looked at the person, the man also saw Su Ming. His eyes became cold and fierce.

Chapter 14: The Fallen Berserker

It's a Berserker from another tribe and he's alone! Judging by his Qi, he should only be at the second level of the Blood Solidification Realm...It'll be easy to kill him! We're also near the tribe and we're going up two against one. There's no need for us to be afraid of him. Nevertheless, since this person has come to challenge, he must have some tricks up his sleeve. But with my power as a third level, it'll be fine." The slightly shorter third level Berserker from the Black Mountain Tribe smiled fiercely. He was not at all worried about Su Ming. In his view, the difference between them was too big. Su Ming was also frail looking so he did not look as if he posed a threat.

More importantly, besides the Wind Stream Tribe, if any of the Black Mountain Tribe members saw a person from another tribe wandering around alone, they would definitely kill the person without mercy. There was no room for negotiation. It was a world where the strong preyed on the weak.

If Xiao Hong had not ventured out to lure them away, they would have entered the cave, killed Su Ming and taken his head back to the tribe for rewards.

"Yu Chi, I'll kill him. Wait here." As he spoke, the big man leapt forward like a tiger, closing the gap between him and Su Ming in just a few breaths.

The man holding onto the little monkey, Yu Chi did not object. He knew that if he killed a Berserker from another tribe and brought his head back to the tribe, he would receive rewards. However, he did not dare snatch away his companion's achievements.

"It's fine. That man is also at the second level like me. If we fight, then we'll be wasting some time. If he goes, then he'll definitely be able to kill him. Maybe I'll even get to share some of his rewards." To Yu Chi, this was a meaningless battle. His eyes were cruel as if he could see what would happen next. He was getting excited by the prospect of the spilling of blood.

The third level Berserker who was getting nearer to Su Ming also had a similar thought. He jumped forward and quickly closed the distance. Very soon, there was not even 1,000 feet between them.

800 feet, 700 feet and then 600 feet!

As he got closer, the man saw Su Ming's face clearly. He let out a roar as he grinned fiercely. His roar alone caused the snow around him to quake and toss into the air. They exploded in a loud bang, creating a layer of white mist which blinded their sights.

At that moment, the man grabbed a long spear from his back with his right hand. He threw it with all his strength at Su Ming, who was standing more than 600 feet away from him.

A sharp and piercing sound sliced through the air. Su Ming felt a sharp and fierce aura coming straight at him. Without thinking, he stepped aside and a whistling sound whipped by his ear. The long spear flew past and just missed him by a hair's breadth.

The man did not approach to check his kill once he threw the spear. Instead, dark wisps of air surrounded his legs, increasing his traveling speed instantly by a dozen fold. Very soon the distance between them was cut down from 600 feet to 300 feet.

"Die!" The man raised his right hand and took out a second spear. Just as he was about to throw it, the mist created by snow scattered. This allowed some of Su Ming's field of vision to return. As it did, an arrow pierced through the snow and rushed towards the man like a flash of lightning.

The man laughed. He raised the spear in his right hand and knocked down the arrow easily. With a crash, the arrow broke into pieces. However at the same time, whistling sounds whipped through the air again and another three arrows came straight towards him.

The arrows were too quick and the angle at which they traveled made it extremely difficult to dodge. It was becoming problematic for him. It made the man frown but still, he scoffed at them and let out a huge blast of dark air underneath his feet. It quickly surrounded his entire body like mist. As the three arrows approached him, they melted into a pool of black water as they touched the black mist.

Even so, much of the black mist had dispersed, causing the man's body to be exposed.

"You're only at the second level of the Blood Solidification Realm and you dare oppose me?" The man took a leap and the distance between them had shortened again. This time, to 200 feet.

Su Ming's face was pale but he held his ground. There were no traces of anxiety within his eyes, just the same chilling calmness.

He took out a few more arrows and fired them rapidly at the man. Once, twice, thrice and with incredible speed, he fired five arrows in succession!

The five arrows practically formed a straight line and the whistling sound they caused as they sliced through the air made it seem as if they had a lot of power. They reached the man almost immediately. When he saw it, he frowned slightly. In their tribe, there were few who could use bows like that.

"The Five Connected!" The man raised the spear in his right hand and swung it against the first arrow. There was a loud crash and the spear broke along with the first arrow.

The second arrow followed quickly. The man let out a low growl and made the black mist surround his body, causing the second arrow to melt as they touched.

The third arrow approached like lightning but the man dodged it by stepping aside. He was quickly chased by the fourth arrow. The man growled and clenched his right fist with a fierce expression. Then he swung it at the arrow. As the arrow broke, a wound appeared on his right hand.

At that moment, the fifth arrow followed closely like a shadow. The man wanted to dodge it but the arrow managed to leave behind a wound on his shoulder as it whistled by him. Fresh blood immediately poured out of his wound.

"I will tear your head off from your shoulders!" The man was not seriously wounded. He only had small wounds and they were considered inconsequential to the members of the Berserker Tribe. However to the man, it was different. He grinned fiercely and traveled another 100 feet closer to Su Ming.

He was already victorious. This was a battle that posed no danger to him. He was at most only slightly bothered by the arrows.

As for Yu Chi, he licked his lips from where he stood. He loved watching such bloody scenes. They served to make him feel excited.

Just as the man was about to take another step, Su Ming approached him. His face was pale but his eyes were still cold and calm. He then did something that momentarily shocked the man and Yu Chi.

He gave up on using his bow and arrow but chose instead to use his fists to face the man.

No one realized that within Su Ming's right hand was the powder of the red pill that he had crushed!

"You asked for it!" The man continued closing their distance and within the blink of an eye, they were only dozens of feet away from each other. Then it turned into thirty feet, twenty feet and ten feet...

The man gathered all the power of his Qi in his right fist and swung it against Su Ming's head. If he had hit it, Su Ming would have undoubtedly died.

But right at that moment, Su Ming lifted his head. The coldness in his eyes was gone and it was replaced with a terrifying killing intent. The strong desire to kill even stunned the man.

It was already too late. Just as Su Ming lifted his head, he swung his right hand at the man and as he did so, the red powder spread in the air. Some of them landed on the man's wound on his right fist while some landed on his shoulder wound.

The man trembled slightly but there were no blood curdling screams, no struggles. Right before Su Ming's eyes, he turned into red mist and disappeared into thin air. It was as if he was boiled alive and erased by the laws of nature. A pile of bones without any flesh were all that was left on the ground. When the wind blew pass, they crumbled into dust.

Among the bone fragments was a strange herb that was black and white in color. It emitted a soft and dim glow.

The sudden turn of events stunned Yu Chi, who was standing nearby. He could not accept it. He could not even believe what he just saw. His gaze was empty due to the shock. Then, he saw the fragile looking boy turn and look at him with cold eyes and an equally cold countenance. He watched as the boy sped towards him.

"The Fire Ape's carcass will be a great supplement. I want it!" Su Ming suddenly said as he approached Yu Chi.

Yu Chi shivered. As he snapped out of his stupor, he found that he was drenched in cold sweat. Su Ming's words also made him realize that he had forgotten to use the monkey as a hostage. He concluded that Su Ming came just to snatch the monkey away.

The moment the idea struck him, he immediately escaped. He still could not fathom how and why his companion died. The chilling sight of his death made him so terrified, he could not accept it.

"You're Fallen! You're a Fallen Berserker!" Yu Chi screeched as his face turned pale. He was completely overcome by terror. He could not accept it. He was so terrified that his legs were shaking. He did not dare to face Su Ming and thus, used up every ounce of his strength to escape. Su Ming was blocking the way back to the Black Mountain Tribe so, Yu Chi could not go back. He could only run towards Black Flame Mountain.

Su Ming was about to give chase when he was suddenly hit by a wave of dizziness. He felt like he was completely drained. He shook his head and forced himself to concentrate.

He cast a glance at the pile of bones on the ground. This was the first time he had killed someone but it was not the time for hesitation. He had no choice but to give chase. He quickly cleaned up the place and picked up whatever usable arrows were left. After that, he took away the strange looking herb from the pile of bones. Su Ming gazed at the direction Yu Chi ran off to, his eyes filled with killing intent once more.

'Xiao Hong is still in his hands. I've already killed one of them. So, I might as well kill the other then the land which I used for quenching will never be found!'

Su Ming gritted his teeth to bear with the fatigue and chased after him.

The two of them ran into the forest. Yu Chi did not even dare look back to see Su Ming. He chose instead to concentrate on fleeing, trying to widen the distance between them. Despite this, if they were to compare their level of familiarity with Dark Dragon Mountain, he could not compare with Su Ming.

Besides, his speed was also still inferior to Su Ming's. He may have had a head start, but very soon Su Ming started to catch up to him with all the tracks he left behind.

Su Ming gritted his teeth to bear with the fatigue. He kept his gaze focused on the man from the Black Mountain Tribe. He knew that the man was scared by his actions. That was why he did not dare engage in battle. It was all part of Su Ming's plans.

With the Scattering Blood, he could kill a person in the blink of an eye and also stun others who saw it. After all, it was something that most people had never seen before. As such, it would terrify them.

Su Ming did not chase after him too closely. However, he was constantly blocked by some obstacles along the way, causing the gap to widen every time he was just about to catch up and pounce on the man. Not long after, the obstacles started to make Su Ming hesitate.

Chapter 15: Metamorphosis

There was a saying that went like this, "If you only have fighting spirit but no physical abilities to support it, in the end, you will still lose." Su Ming had been learning under the elder since he was young. The elder had a lot of scrolls in his house and Su Ming had read almost all of them. There was a lot of knowledge there and he always wanted more.

The wisdom left behind by his ancestors had made their way into Su Ming's head gradually as time passed by. However, they never had a chance to shine. As Su Ming was in pursuit of someone's life, the little bits of wisdom that had been residing in his head began to surface.

Yu Chi was feeling extremely anxious. He originally thought that he could not escape and had made up his mind to give it his all in an attack of desperation. Yet right before his eyes, he saw the distance between them increasing. Then just as he thought he could escape, the distance between them closed once more and this process kept repeating itself.

After this happened a few times, he no longer had any desire to give it his all for a fight to the death. It was hard for him to get into that state of mind anymore.

However in Su Ming's eyes, the Berserker from the Black Mountain Tribe was just a prey, and a terrified prey at that. As soon as he started feeling the slightest bit of hope, he could slowly tear him apart.

Su Ming used this method to wear down Yu Chi's confidence and courage. As the pursuit continued, he would widen the gap and let the other man have the illusion of safety.

Su Ming vaguely remembered one of the scrolls saying that once the prey went through a long period of time switching between the state of anxiety and relaxation, its fatigue and suffering would increase exponentially. That sort of torture was enough to destroy one's soul.

Su Ming only understood the logic behind it the last time but when he was giving chase, he slowly began to fully comprehend. The knowledge he had obtained slowly became instincts. He did not even need to do it on purpose, his body moved on its own and brought him the results that he wanted.

That day marked the first time Su Ming killed someone and the first time he hunted a human for the purpose of killing him. It was the first time in his life that he was experiencing a change in his personality. Yu Chi on the other hand was the only person who would experience the process of Su Ming change.

Yu Chi could feel it clearly but he did not know what caused the change. He only felt his confidence and courage diminishing after the strange scene of his companion's death. They were gradually worn down bit by bit during the chase.

In fact, at one point, he no longer had the urge to turn his head back anymore. Although Su Ming was a second level Berserker in the Blood Solidification Realm just like him, he had the feeling that once he turned back he would surely die. If he continued fleeing, he felt that he would have a chance of surviving.

He was so afraid that he did not feel his exhaustion building up. This was especially so when he discovered that the young man had disappeared at some point when the distance between them kept increasing. The exhaustion almost made him sink into his knees when he finally realized but he could not rest. He chose instead to grit his teeth and persevere.

Unfortunately, this did not last long. When he saw Su Ming's silhouette appear at the corner of his eye again, the exhaustion he felt immediately increased by tenfold. It almost drove Yu Chi mad.

"He's a Fallen Berserker! He's definitely a Fallen Berserker!" Yu Chi felt himself trembling in fear. As he was escaping, he came to a junction. If he turned left, he would have gone into the deeper parts of the forest and left Black Flame Mountain. If he

turned right, he would have gone around Black Flame Mountain and gone back to the Black Mountain Tribe.

Su Ming had known about that junction for a long time. He narrowed his eyes and ignored his own fatigue. He focused all of his energy to his feet, increasing his speed by one explosive burst. He did not give chase, choosing instead to cut through the forest and approach the right turning at the junction.

It was clear that he had predicted Yu Chi's choice to travel right. That was why he chose to turn right and close the distance between them. As he rushed forward, Su Ming brought out his bow and shot a few arrows at the direction of the right turning. As the arrows whistled through the air, all of them hit the trees on the right path. The arrowheads buried their way into the stumps and their fletchings even hummed as they vibrated in the air.

The humming sound seemed to possess some sort of strange force. As the sound traveled into Yu Chi's ears, he hesitated.

Su Ming pursued Yu Chi at full speed once more and attacked with his bow again. Yu Chi let out a hysterical cry and was about to turn right when Su Ming suddenly increased his speed, giving Yu Chi a false impression.

He had a feeling that if he ran to the right, Su Ming would most definitely catch up to him. If he escaped to the left, he would then be able to widen the distance between them because Su Ming made the wrong decision.

He could still hear the humming sound from the arrows. Yu Chi gritted his teeth and changed his direction, turning left instead. Very soon, he disappeared into the forest.

A frightening look crossed Su Ming's eyes amid the fatigue and his lips curled up in a cold smile.

Quickly, he pulled out the arrows from the trees and continued pursuing the man from the Black Mountain Tribe.

"If you can control the direction of your enemy's escape, then you can control his body," Su Ming murmured. He remembered reading these words somewhere in one of the beast skin scrolls. He was not able to understand them before but now he understood what they meant.

As he gave chase, time passed by slowly. Very soon, night came and the moon rose up high in the sky. As the moonlight touched the snow on the ground, it reflected a white light which illuminated the forest in a silvery gleam even though it was night time.

During the chase, Su Ming had already changed Yu Chi's course of escape three times, gradually controlling the other man's body to run in the direction he wanted.

He touched the unconscious little monkey lying against his bosom, a gentle expression appearing in his tired and bloodshot eyes. Yu Chi had thrown the little monkey away in the opposite direction during the first time Su Ming forced him to change his course. However because of that, the distance between them increased.

Throwing away the little monkey had worked out for Yu Chi. Su Ming immediately ran towards the little monkey, causing Yu Chi to let out a sigh of relief and his speed increased.

In spite of that, it did not last long. Soon after, Yu Chi noticed arrows upon arrows whistling by his side, all coming from behind. This again almost drove Yu Chi mad.

The stars in the sky shone brightly like eyes that were looking at the chase in the forest.

Yu Chi was already exhausted. His footsteps faltered but what he felt physically was inconsequential. What mattered most was his mental state. It was already broken. He regretted it. He regretted discovering the little hole. He regretted chasing after the Fire Ape. All of this would not have happened if he had not done any of it.

Before him, there was a forest filled with a variety of plants. Even though it was winter, he still could not see into the deeper parts of the forest. When Yu Chi was still hesitating and contemplating on going into the forest, Su Ming's silhouette appeared at the edge of the forest.

He stood there, breathing heavily. Huge amounts of white mist flowed out from his mouth and his eyes were laden with steely coldness. He did not immediately give chase but chose to wait.

"This place will be the burial ground I give you! If you can step out of here alive even with such exhaustion, you can count yourself extremely lucky!" Su Ming's muttered once his breathing began to even out.

Just as he finished speaking, a terrifying cry traveled across the forest in the quiet of the night. The cry echoed in the forest, causing a shiver to travel down the spines of all who heard it.

After a while, the cry gradually grew weaker before finally turning into a faint moan.

Su Ming walked towards the direction of the voice in solemn silence. He walked into the forest slowly with each step carefully calculated. Every time he took a few steps forward, he would look around before choosing to either retreat, go around a certain place or leap forward.

It was the hunting spot for the Dark Mountain Tribe. That area of the forest was filled with traps and the locations of the traps were unknown to all except the members of the Dark Mountain Tribe.

Even Su Ming only knew the locations of most of the traps, not all of them.

If Yu Chi had been in perfect condition when he went in, he might have been able to get out alive. However due to the condition he was in, he sealed his fate once he stepped into the place. It was the same as stepping into his own death trap.

Su Ming walked forward carefully. The moans gradually became weaker as they traveled to his ears. As Su Ming walked forward slowly, he saw that Yu Chi was impaled to a tree by a line of sharpened, and thick wooden spikes, the size of adult men.

His entire body was drenched in his own blood but he was not dead yet. He was still shivering and moaning weakly...

Su Ming stepped forward quietly and once he was by Yu Chi's side, he looked at him. After a long while, he took out his horn and sliced Yu Chi's throat.

Yu Chi struggled furiously for a few moments before breathing his last. Before his eyes lost their life, they were focused on Su Ming and filled with hatred.

Su Ming was silent. He cut through the trap's ropes and took away whatever remained on Yu Chi's corpse. He brought out the small amount of Scattering Blood powder he had left and turned the corpse into a pile of bones. He then turned it into dust by touching it.

He turned around silently and walked out of the forest. Once he was out, he looked at the moon in the sky with uncertainty in his gaze. It was the second time he killed someone. He could not describe how he felt. There was nervousness, fear, uncertainty...

After a long while, he let out a sigh. The Black Mountain Tribe was from the same denomination as the Dark Mountain Tribe but after so many years, they had turned into mortal enemies. If one of the tribes became stronger, the other would have been faced with the threat of being massacred. All of the men would have been killed and the women would have been taken away to help with the reproduction of the tribe.

It was good thing that this had not happened. For many years, the elders of both tribes had been on the same level. They would not easily incite war.

He took a deep breath. Fatigue took over Su Ming's entire body. He gritted his teeth and dragged his exhausted body far, far away...

When dawn arrived and the sun rose, Su Ming returned to the place he used for the quenching of herbs in Black Flame Mountain. His face was a sickly yellow. He crawled into the cave, and once he was inside, he fell to the side and fainted.

Chapter 16: Elder

"Brother..."

"Brother... Can you hear me...?" In his dreams, he heard that familiar, sad and lonely voice once more as it echoed in his head. The voice remained in his head for a long time. His unconscious body trembled lightly as if he was struggling.

"Brother, I'm waiting for you..."

As the calls grew stronger, Su Ming was jolted awake from his sleep. His gaze was unfocused as he stared at the wall before him and let his mind wander. His thoughts were interrupted by excited screeches. He turned his head and saw Xiao Hong pouncing on him happily. Then it started climbing all over his body.

Xiao Hong woke up much earlier. It was only in a state of unconsciousness before and was not heavily injured. Once it woke up it kept its gaze focused on Su Ming, waiting anxiously for him to wake up.

When Su Ming woke up, it was out of its mind with joy.

Su Ming smiled as he looked at the little monkey but his smile was laced with uncertainty. It was the second time that he had the dream...

He took a deep breath. Su Ming shook his head, forcing himself not to think about the strange dream anymore. He chose instead to look at the perfectly normal looking black debris hanging off his neck.

He touched the debris, his eyes gradually becoming clear of doubt.

He already had first-hand experience of the changes the black debris brought upon him. The creation of the Scattering Dust had increased his training speed by leaps and bounds. The red pill was also created by accident, allowing Su Ming to obtain complete control and gain the upper hand in a battle between life and death.

"I'll still need to create more pills... I saw a door at that strange place but there were 15 small holes on the door. I did not have enough pills last time, that's why I was hesitating. But now, I really want to know just what will happen to the door once I put in 15 Scattering Dusts..." Su Ming muttered lowly under his breath.

'I'll need to make more Scattering Blood. These pills... will be my trump card! Also, I'll need to go back to the tribe... I haven't gone back for quite some time. The elder has been stuck at the ninth level for many years as well. Perhaps the Scattering Dust can help.'

Su Ming stood up and moved his limbs. Most of the fatigue in his body had gone by then.

He concentrated on making the pills again and continued with the refinement of the blood in his veins. There were some parts of his body that felt a bit sluggish as blood tried to circulate through them. It was not as smooth as before and Su Ming believed that it was a wound left behind when he tried to break through the first level of the Blood Solidification Realm. He would not be able to heal the wound within a short period of time.

Within the same month, Su Ming ventured out of the cave a few times. He also had the little monkey help him collect herbs.

Su Ming even went out specially to pick two of the red herbs required for Scattering Blood. He wanted to pick more but sensing danger, he decided not to be greedy.

Using the vast amounts of herbs he collected, Su Ming began refining his Qi and his blood while also using the herbs to create the medicinal pills he wanted the past month. The muffled sounds of pills being created echoed throughout the cave.

It was a month later and the sky was still dark with only faint traces of light. Su Ming gave the little monkey a few instructions and left the mountain alone. Then, he disappeared into the forest.

Su Ming, who had arrived at the second level of the Blood Solidification Realm, traveled quickly within the forest. He ran across the icy plains like a flash of light. Before noon, he had already left the forest and was outside the Dark Mountain Tribe settlement. As he looked at the settlement, a smile appeared across his face.

'I haven't been back for quite some time...'

Su Ming walked towards it. Everything was normal. Many children were playing around and some the tribe members were sparring against each other.

Su Ming's return attracted some of the tribe members' attention. He had been gone for a long time, after all. They came out and greeted him with smiles on their faces.

"Su Ming, you're finally back! Where did you go?" Su Ming stroked a child's head and just as he was about to leave to the elder's house, an excited voice rang out from behind him.

He turned around and looked. The person who spoke was a big and well-built man but he had a slight baby face. It was a clear sign that he was still young. That person was Lei Chen.

"What?" Su Ming glanced at Lei Chen and could feel that the Qi in his body had grown much stronger. The aura he felt from Lei Chen was actually quite similar to the Berserker he killed using Scattering Blood.

"You almost broke through the fourth level of the Blood Solidification Realm?" Su Ming asked, surprised.

Lei Chen grinned widely and walked up to Su Ming's side to speak softly to him.

"I have a feeling I'll reach the next level soon. Hehe, the elder said the Berserker Blood within my body is quite pure. If this continues, some day I will be able to reach the elder's level." As Lei Chen spoke, his eyes shone with excitement. Soon after, he began to look at Su Ming carefully and he was stunned. Then, he widened his eyes in disbelief. Just as he was about to speak...

"Come to my place tonight, we'll talk later. Let me go see the elder first." Su Ming knew what Lei Chen was about to say. He gave him a faint smile and went to the elder's house.

As he watched Su Ming's back, Lei Chen was speechless. He pulled at his hair in confusion and mumbled a few words, trying to piece things together. However in the end, he still could not understand it. He still remembered to go to Su Ming's place later that night though.

As he approached the elder's house, Su Ming slowed down. There were slight signs of anxiety and fear in his eyes. Su Ming respected the elder for taking care of him since he was young. To him, the elder was just like his grandfather and their relationship could not be described with words.

He did not want to lie to the elder but there were some things that he could not disclose like the piece of debris on his neck. Su Ming was not a child anymore. He could tell if the public knew about the piece of debris, it could very well mean the doom of the entire tribe, not just himself.

He could not speak of it.

Su Ming took a deep breath and stood in front of the elder's house. He did not enter immediately. He could hear the faint traces of voices coming from the inside, like people were in a meeting.

He waited patiently until the door of the elder's house opened and out came three men. These three men were all built like small hills. When they appeared, Su Ming felt a great pressure. Their presence even caused the Qi in his body to stir. He thought that he was about to be swept away by a typhoon.

Su Ming inhaled sharply and took a few steps back instinctively. The three men were the leaders of the Dark Mountain Tribe. Before Su Ming Awakened, he had not been as badly affected. He could only vaguely feel that they were some of the best Berserkers besides the elder.

Now that Su Ming was a practitioner at the second level of the Blood Solidification Realm, the oppressive feeling was much stronger than before when he met the tribe leaders.

The Qi within the Dark Mountain Tribe's leader was so great, he felt like it could shake heaven and earth. Combined with the vague Berserker Mark on his face, it only served to make him even more terrifying.

Su Ming also knew the two men beside the tribe leader. The man on his left was also a man in his 40s. There was a mark shaped like a scorpion on his face. The level of Qi within him was only slightly weaker than the tribe leader.

His arms were also very long and there was a big bow slung across his back. For some unknown reason, when Su Ming looked at the bow, he felt like he could hear the agonizing cries of its numerous victims. It caused him to feel a little wary of the man.

That man was the Head of the Guards of the Dark Mountain Tribe!

The Head of the Guards was not a name, but a title given by its predecessor to the successor. There could only be one Head of the Guards in each tribe and it was a title given only to the strongest archers in the tribe.

The last person standing to the tribe leader's right was a man in his 30s. His facial expressions were rather stiff. He was not a man who smiled and talked often. His eyes were usually narrowed into a slit and it was difficult to see the full view of his eyes.

He was the chief of the hunters in Dark Mountain Tribe and was responsible for all the hunts outside the tribe settlement. His name was Shan Hen!

These three people were considered to be the strongest in Dark Mountain Tribe besides the elder!

Su Ming took a deep breath and stepped aside as he bowed before them.

The tribe leader was frowning. It was apparent that the meeting with the elder did not end on good terms. When he walked out of the house, he did not even look at Su Ming. He just walked past him.

As for the Head of the Guards, he smiled at Su Ming when he saw him. Then, he nodded as a sign of acknowledgment to his presence before leaving with the tribe leader.

Shan Hen, the chief of the hunters also treated Su Ming as if he was invisible. He ignored him as he walked by.

After the three men left, there was a hint of dubiousness in Su Ming's eyes. He felt uncertain about the Qi in his body. If Lei Chen could sense it, why did the three strongest Berserkers in the tribe not feel anything?

"I already concealed your Qi. Come in, why are you still standing outside?!" Just as Su Ming was still being troubled, the elder's stern voice sounded from within the house.

Su Ming lowered his head and walked into the house.

"You finally decided to come back?" The elder still wore a sack cloth and had his hair tied in many small braids. His features still looked as old and weary as ever, but his eyes were vibrant with life. His tone of voice was grave and serious but the joy in his eyes could not be concealed.

Su Ming mumbled a few words. He still hung his head low, not really having the courage to speak.

"You grew a pair of balls, is that it? How could you leave the tribe and not return for so many months? Have you forgotten about me? Hmph, lift up your head. Let me take a look at you." There were hints of dissatisfaction in the elder's voice.

Su Ming's expression was anxious as he lifted his head and looked at the elder.

"Elder..."

Before he could finish, the elder who was sitting with his legs crossed suddenly grabbed Su Ming sternly with his right hand. Su Ming stumbled forward a few steps as the elder pressed his right hand on his chest.

A soft and gentle power weaved itself into Su Ming's body. Once it melded together with his blood, it immediately healed the wounds that Su Ming did not even realize he received. It also dissolved the dangers of Su Ming risking his health when he forcefully reached the second level of the Blood Solidification Realm and killed without stabilizing the Qi in his body.

When the elder retrieved his right hand from Su Ming's chest, Su Ming trembled. He immediately took a spatula and opened up a gash on his arm. Instantly, black blood flowed out from the gash and there was even a stench in the air which came from the blood.

"You haven't even stabilized the Qi in your body and you already ventured out to kill someone? You've really grown a pair, haven't you?" As the elder observed Su Ming's

reaction, the praise in his eyes grew stronger. Nonetheless, he still spoke harshly. Even so, he took out a dark green bottle and handed it to Su Ming.

When all the black blood flowed out from the gash, Su Ming's body felt refreshed. Once he took the bottle and opened it, he touched the liquid in the bottle with his finger and spread it over his wound.

Chapter 17: Berserker Mark

"Elder, I didn't want to do it. It's just that they went overboard. They snatched Xiao Hong away," Su Ming mumbled.

"They?" The elder was stunned.

"One of them was a Berserker at the second level of the Blood Solidification Realm and the other was a Berserker at the third level." Su Ming placed the cork back on the bottle then put the bottle on the table beside him.

"Black Mountain Tribe? How did you manage to escape?" The elder narrowed his eyes. A cold and steely look settled in his eyes.

"I didn't escape. They died." Su Ming lifted his head and looked at the elder.

The elder was stunned but was also visibly moved. After falling silent momentarily, he decided not to ask Su Ming about the details. Su Ming was like his own child. He took care of him as he grew up and he knew of his character.

"You met them at Black Flame Mountain right? The information you gave us last time was really useful. You should have been rewarded for that but because you hid the fact that you've become a Berserker, that reward is canceled. Now that you're a Berserker, stay. I will tell you about some of my experiences training in the Ways of the Berserker. I'll also card through the blood veins in your body." The elder looked at Su Ming and smiled.

"Elder..." Su Ming scratched his head sheepishly. After a moment's hesitation, he opened his mouth and spoke softly, "I'm sorry. Aren't you going to ask me how I became a Berserker?"

"Why should I? Everyone has their own secrets. I just need to know that my Su Ming has finally become a Berserker." The elder laughed happily.

Su Ming's eyes were teary. He looked at the elder and nodded. He would never forget the elder's kindness towards him or the Dark Dragon's Saliva that had been flowing in his veins or all that had happened. All of these things were imprinted on his mind and soul.

"Elder, I have some pills... Here..." Su Ming looked at the elder and spoke softly.

"Pills?" The elder asked in bewilderment, then shook his head and laughed.

"You're talking about herbs, right? I know that you must have gotten yourself some rare herbs but I'm the elder of Dark Mountain Tribe. Unless they're really very rarely seen, I've seen every... What?!"

Before the elder finished speaking, Su Ming produced two small bottles and placed them before the elder.

The two bottles were filled with green pills and they were letting out a nice therapeutic scent. Both bottles had about a dozen pills within them.

The elder's face turned solemn. He took one of the bottle containing the pills and inspected them. Once he was certain that it was nothing like he had ever seen, he took a sniff and his countenance immediately changed.

"What a strange medicine! I just took a sniff and I can already feel my blood circulating faster!"

The elder mumbled and scrutinized the pills further. After a moment, he closed his eyes and began to think. When he finally opened his eyes, he looked at Su Ming.

"These are called pills?"

Su Ming nodded his head and pointed towards the bottle containing the pills. He started introducing the effects and the methods of using the pills to the elder. The elder drew a sharp breath and his demeanor changed completely once he listened halfway.

There were no signs of hesitation. The elder immediately waved his right hand and right before Su Ming, an illusion of the statue of the God of the Berserkers appeared. The shape of the statue was that of the half human, half beast statue of the God of the Berserkers from Dark Mountain Tribe.

The moment the statue appeared, a gentle energy spread around the room.

"Continue." Su Ming looked at the elder's solemn face and felt his heart pounding against his chest. Then he continued to slowly tell the elder all the effects of the Scattering Dust.

The elder was already standing. Once he finished listening to Su Ming, he took out one of the Scattering Dusts and observed it carefully. Then he swallowed it in one bite. He believed in Su Ming. There was practically no hesitation in his movements. He then took out a small purple bottle and drank down what little that remained in the bottle.

He sat down with his legs crossed once again. Very soon, his body let out a bright and bloody red glow. The light was glaringly bright and it covered the entire room. Su Ming took a few steps back. His eyes were filled with admiration.

He could see the many blood veins on the elder's body. He could not tell just how many there were but the presence of a Qi much stronger than the tribe leader's filled the entire room.

Su Ming drew a sharp breath. He watched the God of Berserker's glowing statue floating midair and knew that if it were not for the illusion of the statue, the light released by the elder would have covered the entire tribe. It could possibly have been seen even from afar.

The light disappeared just as quickly as it came. As the elder opened his eyes, the red light that enveloped his entire body also dissipated. His eyes were filled with a layer of excitement. He looked at the Scattering Dust and took a deep breath.

"Su Ming, you must remember one thing!" The elder lifted his head and looked at Su Ming.

Su Ming immediately stood to attention.

"From today onwards, do not tell anyone about the pills! Even if I asked you again, you mustn't speak of it! From today onwards, I will not ask you anything about this!"

"Even within the tribe, you must remember not to talk about this to anyone! Not even to Lei Chen!" The elder spoke sternly as he looked deeply into Su Ming's eyes.

Su Ming hesitated for a moment.

The elder sighed. He understood Su Ming. He knew that Su Ming was an honest man. That was why he chose to speak sternly again.

"Su Ming, listen to me. You mustn't tell anyone!"

Su Ming nodded silently as his gaze was filled with resolution.

"The tribe... is not safe..." The elder muttered but his words surprised Su Ming momentarily. It dawned on him especially when he remembered how the elder had hidden his Qi from the three leaders of the tribe.

"There is a traitor in our tribe! Right now, only the tribe leader and I know about this. No one else knows about it. The traitor has hidden himself too well. We don't know who it is..."

"With the information you brought to us, perhaps my old arch nemesis from the Black Mountain Tribe has really found a way to reach the next level... I've been feeling that the weather around the area has been a bit odd lately... It's as though a major disaster is about to approach."

"Su Ming, these pills of yours are good so I'll be keeping them. Don't give me more of these. If I can really break through to the next level, these will be enough. But if I can't, even if you give me more, it'll still be useless..."

"I'm not lacking in herbs, it's just that I'm stuck and I just need a chance to break through..." The elder sighed. He spoke to Su Ming a little more about his experiences training in the Ways of the Berserker. Then he took out a strange object made of twigs. The elder's gaze was filled with nostalgia when he looked at the item.

After some time, he gave the item to Su Ming solemnly.

"I got this when I was out adventuring during my younger days. This thing is called a bamboo slip. You will only see these in big tribes. There are a lot of uses of herbs recorded in this bamboo slip. Take it."

Su Ming took the bamboo slip and was marveled by it. He put it away in his bosom and was just about to go back to his own house when the elder looked at Su Ming solemnly.

"Su Ming, I'm happy that you became a Berserker but you must understand that once you become a Berserker, you are no longer the same as the normal members of the tribe. The road to become a practitioner of the Ways of the Berserker is extremely difficult. The slightest mistake can bring about death. You must have felt it when you were at Black Flame Mountain."

"But we are members of the Berserker tribe. We cannot fear death, much less give up because the road ahead is too hard to walk."

"I know what your dreams are. You want to leave this place and travel to see the world. I fully support you!"

Su Ming listened quietly and nodded.

"You are a good child. I've watched over you for many years and I know that. But my training is insufficient and I can't help you too much... I thought it would be fine if our Su Ming couldn't become a Berserker. However, if he did manage to become a practitioner of the Berserker Arts, then I will do everything that I can to make your journey as easy

as possible..." A smile gradually appeared on the elder's serious face and he waved at Su Ming to approach him.

"Come, sit down before me and circulate the blood in your veins as you usually do when you train."

Su Ming looked at the old man whose hair was speckled with white and whose face was covered with wrinkles. The elder was smiling kindly at him. He knew that there were no blood ties between him and the elder but the affection they felt towards each other could overcome all blood ties.

"Elder..." Su Ming mumbled.

"Come here already." The elder laughed heartily.

Su Ming sat down before the elder obediently and took a deep breath. Then he slowly began to move the Qi around his body. Soon, the six blood veins manifested. As the six blood veins began to give out a red glow, the vague shadow of a seventh blood vein appeared and started to manifest slowly.

Su Ming had been unable to manifest the seventh blood vein for the past month. He had not even been able to summon an illusion of it. This was largely connected to the internal injuries he had obtained. Since the elder had healed his internal injuries, the seventh blood vein appeared naturally when he activated the Qi in his body.

"You've already inherited the knowledge from the statue of the God of the Berserkers. You know that the Berserkers will need to manifest 11 blood veins if they want to reach the third level. As for the fourth level, they will need 25 blood veins."

"You will need 53 blood veins for the fifth and there will only be more for the rest of the levels... As for the 11th level of the Blood Solidification Realm, you should need 781 blood veins."

"But the manifestation of blood veins required may not be the same for some people. Most of the Berserkers will need the same number of blood veins to reach the next level, but there are some people who are capable of increasing the number of blood veins in their body. The more blood veins you have, the more likely it is for you to reach the Transcendence Realm!"

"From what I've heard, all the Berserkers who have managed to reach the Transcendence Realm have always had more than 900 blood veins during the Blood Solidification Realm! Take for example the elder of the Wind Stream Tribe. I've known him for many years and I know that he had 917 blood veins many years ago!"

"I've heard before that in middle sized tribes and in some big tribes, there are those in the Blood Solidification Realm who have manifested more than 930 blood veins."

"This is the Blood Solidification Realm of the Berserker tribe... There have been some people in the history of the Berserker Tribe who have manifested 999 blood veins during the Blood Solidification Realm. These people have all become very famous and powerful people."

"There are even rumors that if you manifest 1,000 blood veins, you will obtain completion in the Blood Solidification Realm. But that sort of completion could only be seen during our ancestors' time more than thousands of years ago. It's extremely rare nowadays. I can say that no one has reached completion in the Blood Solidification Realm. As for the details, I don't know about it because I don't have enough information." The elder's voice seemed to hold a strange sort of power that echoed in Su Ming's head as he moved the Qi in his body.

"After Blood Solidification is the Transcendence Realm. Transcendence actually means to gather all the manifested blood veins and refine them into the purest form of Berserker Blood. Then you draw your own personal solidified Berserker Mark on your body... The Berserker Mark has to come from your own heart and desire... I'm excited to see what Berserker Mark you would draw should you reach the Transcendence Realm someday."

Chapter 18: The Art from the Berserker Ancestors

"Su Ming, these are the things that you did not inherit from the statue of the God of Berserkers but they are things that all Berserkers must know and remember! I might not be able to reach the Transcendence Realm in my life..."

"The elder in Wind Stream Tribe was not as powerful as I was before he was 20. When he was 34, he was only barely able to keep up with me in a battle. Back then, there wasn't anyone who didn't know who I was in all the tribes around the area!" The elder spoke slowly and his face flushed. There was even a hint of pride in his eyes.

However, the radiance from his pride was dimmed by something, like it was sealed in a box and covered by a layer of dust...

"At that time, I had already arrived at the ninth level of the Blood Solidification Realm..." The elder sighed as he mumbled bitterly. He spoke as reminisced about the past. The sadness in his eyes grew.

"Su Ming, you must remember. There will always be people who are stronger and more powerful than you. You must never be arrogant..." The elder shook his head, as if he did not want to talk about his past any longer.

"I've ventured out of the tribe three times in my life and I've experienced a lot of things. I may have lost just as much but I learned a Berserker Art. This isn't a Berserker Art that the Wind Stream Tribe will ever learn. It is also difficult to find this in slightly bigger or medium sized tribes. This is an art left behind by our Berserker ancestors that can only be learned in big tribes..."

"This is the true Art of Berserker's Awakening... You can only use it once in your life, and it is an art used to bless a chosen descendant." The elder narrowed his eyes in concentration and lifted his right hand. Almost immediately, his entire palm was filled with blood and he pressed his palm slowly on Su Ming's forehead.

"Su Ming, this is the first and only time I will cast the Awakening Art and I will cast it on you. This is my blessing for you. I hope you will one day fulfill my dreams and reach the Transcendence Realm for Dark Mountain Tribe again!"

"Activate the Qi in your body and absorb the Berserker Blood I've trained for the past 80 years!" The elder's entire body glowed a bloody red. It was especially prominent in his right hand, as if blood was about to fall. A huge number of blood veins also manifested on his body. Just by looking at it, there were approximately 700 blood veins!

This was the elder's true power - a manifestation of more than 700 blood veins. Due to this, he was able to fight a Berserker at the tenth level despite being only at the ninth level of the Blood Solidification Realm!

Su Ming trembled. As he circulated the Qi around his body, a gigantic wave of heat that seemed to be endless flowed from his forehead into his entire body. It caused the flow of Qi in his body to increase drastically. A huge amount of black substance flowed out of Su Ming's pores and he felt his body slowly becoming free of blockage. With each breath he took, his entire body felt like it simultaneously took in a huge amount of the air around him.

Cracking sounds rang through the air. Su Ming's body no longer shivered but his face was flushed red as though he had just eaten a very good supplement. Even the blood veins in his body began to change!

The seventh blood vein that was only an illusion earlier had already manifested. Once it did, the eighth blood vein followed suit and manifested as well. The ninth blood vein also appeared as an illusion.

The speed of the Qi flow in Su Ming's body had increased to a terrifying speed. With each complete circulation, it was as if all the blood in his body had clotted. He even had the false impression that his blood had turned into a sticky substance.

"This is the true meaning of the Blood Solidification Realm! You must solidify and refine your own blood and transform them into Berserker Blood!"

When he was training in the past, he would always feel that he had insufficient blood not long into his training. At that moment however, the feeling was gone as endless heat traveled into his body from his forehead. He even had the impression that the thought of not having enough blood was just an illusion.

The elder, who was enveloped by a bloody glow looked like he had turned into a giant red ball of light. Su Ming himself was also a bloody red ball of light but compared to the elder, he was just like a firefly under the moonlight. Yet the firefly was absorbing the light from the moon and growing stronger quickly.

‘This... This is just what the elder told me before. This is the true Berserker’s Awakening in the Berserker Tribe. This is the Berserker Art that only big tribes possess, the ancient Berserker Art!’

The ninth blood vein manifested in an impressive manner. The feeling of power enveloped Su Ming’s entire body. The black substance had already been completely dispelled from his body and it was replaced by an indescribable fragrance.

Su Ming sunk into a warm and comfortable feeling.

The elder kept his attention on Su Ming’s body. He knew that the purpose of the ancient Berserker Art, the true Berserker’s Awakening was not to increase the chosen descendant’s training but to eliminate all the undesirable substances within the body. It was to create a body suitable for training in the Ways of the Berserker for the chosen descendant. It could make the road to train in the Ways of the Berserker much easier for the chosen descendant.

It was not just a simple banishment of undesirable substances but he had to use his Berserker Blood as a guide to expel the undesirable substances in a manner that he did not understand. It was technique that he could use only once in his life!

If he tried to do it a second time, his body would burst and his soul would shatter.

As the fragrance from Su Ming’s body grew stronger, the elder smiled. Nevertheless, he did not stop. He took a deep breath and raised his left hand, pressing it over his right hand. Soon, an even stronger and greater wave of warmth entered Su Ming’s body.

Su Ming trembled. There was no longer any black substance coming out of his body but as the warmth entered his body, a beating sound reverberated throughout his body. Then, more black substance was secreted from his body right before his eyes.

At the same time, the 10th blood vein in Su Ming’s body quickly manifested to its physical state. The process only lasted for a moment. Even the 11th blood vein was already showing itself faintly on his body!

Once the 11th blood vein manifested itself, Su Ming would become a Berserker at the third level of the Blood Solidification Realm!

However, the manifestation of the 11th blood vein was proving itself to be extremely difficult. Even after Su Ming's body stopped excreting any black substance and released a nice fragrance, the 11th blood vein was still in an illusionary state.

"Su Ming, I cannot help you by forcefully increasing the state of your training. This will not bring any good to you. But if you're diligent, you'll reach the third level naturally before long." The elder's voice echoed in Su Ming's ears.

Su Ming took a deep breath and opened his eyes slowly.

The moment he opened his eyes, the world looked slightly different. His sight became much clearer. The details he had never noticed before were now as clear as day.

His world had become different.

Both of his eyes were as clear as water yet, if anyone took a closer look, they would see that his eyes were like the abyss. People who looked into them would be unable to look away.

As he looked at the elder, he saw that the elder's face had aged once again. There were even signs of fatigue in his features. Despite that, there were clear signs of great kindness and affection as the elder gazed upon him.

Su Ming stared at the elder in a dumbfounded state. In his silence, he knelt down and bowed towards the elder.

"Enough. You're a grown man now. You're no longer a La Su. I'm a little tired. Go back. Let me rest."

"Elder..." Su Ming bit his lip and gazed deeply at the elder, carving the scene before him into his mind. For all of eternity and his entire life, he would never ever forget that there was a person who accompanied him when he was younger and allowed him to experience familial love. He understood that this was a love that he would never be able to repay for his entire life...

"Come with me to...Wind Stream Tribe next time. We'll be visiting the elder of Wind Stream Tribe and seeing the Berserkers there. Representatives from Black Mountain Tribe, Dark Dragon Tribe and other smaller tribes will also be going... It will be a good experience for all of you younger generation..." Before he left, he heard the elder's voice echoing in his ears.

"I've already concealed the Qi and fragrance from your body. No one will notice unless they are more powerful than I am. Do not tell anyone about the fact that you became a Berserker... We'll make a decision once I find the traitor."

Su Ming nodded. When he saw the elder sitting down cross-legged with his eyes closed and immersing himself in his training, he quietly left.

He knew that Wind Stream Tribe was the only medium sized tribe around the region. It was considered as the leader of the area. Su Ming had heard rumors of the elder of Wind Stream Tribe being a powerful Berserker who had arrived at the Transcendence Realm. Not only did he have a long lifespan, he also had the power to crush heaven and earth.

'Transcendence Realm... I wonder if I'll be able to arrive at that realm in my lifetime... I wonder if I can even draw my own Berserker Mark...'

Su Ming's eyes lit up with ambition. The Transcendence Realm was like a legend to him. It was too far away from him.

'So this is the elder's real strength. I didn't expect him to be so strong... I heard that the elder from Black Mountain Tribe had some sort of secret... or else they wouldn't have been able to last so long...'

Su Ming shook his head and refused to continue thinking about the matter.

When Su Ming returned to his house, which had been left barren for the past few months, he calmed down. The place was clean. There was barely any dust around. Su Ming knew that this could only mean that Chen Xin dropped by during the days that he was gone.

Chen Xin was the only girl within Dark Mountain Tribe whom Su Ming had more contact with. She was the tribe leader's daughter. She would only be married to the future tribe leader so that the tribe would continue to prosper and there were no disputes about that within the tribe.

Su Ming knew this since a long time ago and was not offended or saddened by it. Chen Xin was like a little sister to him and he held no other feelings towards her.

He sat down with his legs crossed on the wooden bed. Su Ming touched the piece of debris on his neck as he fell into deep thought.

As nighttime arrived, Lei Chen came to Su Ming's house puzzled. When he saw Su Ming, he was dumbfounded. The silly look on his face made Su Ming smile.

He took out the herbs he got from the remains of the Berserker from Black Mountain Tribe. Su Ming knew about the Sky Stone of course. It was one of the rarer herbs. He

had only managed to obtain one of them during all the years he went to collect herbs in the mountains. That too, was only a shoot. It was unlike the one he had in the present, which was fully grown and had six leaves.

"A Sky Stone with six leaves. I'll need more of them to make some medication but I can give you a leaf. You might be able to use it to help with your training." Su Ming plucked one of the leaves from the plant and gave it to Lei Chen.

Lei Chen laughed and scratched his head. Then he pat his chest bashfully after he took it from Su Ming's hands.

"Su Ming, I don't know about all this stuff. But I already told you since I was young, I will become Dark Mountain Tribe's leader in the future. With me around, I'll always protect you!"

Su Ming laughed heartily and as he spoke to Lei Chen. He noticed that Lei Chen kept looking at the leaf from the Sky Stone, unable to concentrate. It was obvious that he wanted to eat it and immediately start training.

Hence, he pretended to be tired. When Lei Chen noticed, he immediately lit up with excitement. He quickly got up and left.

The sky had already darkened and silence gradually fell upon the tribe. Su Ming blocked the door to his house with a chair and sat down with his legs crossed on the bed. He took a deep breath and touched the piece of debris hanging off his neck with his right hand. In his mind, he pictured the strange place he saw that day.

'I already have an ample supply of Scattering Dust ready... I wonder if I'll be able obtain something new this time...'

Su Ming closed his eyes. He had long since figured out the method to enter the strange place. What he needed to do was gather all the blood to his chest when he was training. Then he would be able to go to the strange place.

He had already tried it multiple times during his training. It was finally time for him to do it.

Chapter 19: The Second Door

The place was still surrounded by fog. He could not see too far away. The only thing vaguely visible was the peak of the mountain amid the mist. It was quiet around him. There was neither wind nor sound around the area.

Su Ming looked at the mountain shrouded by fog. It was his second time there. It was also the second time he stood where he was and sized up the strange mountain before him, especially the strange letters and drawings carved into the mountain. Su Ming had a sense of respect for whoever it was that left them behind.

He took a deep breath and looked at the accessory on his chest. The black piece of debris was gone. He pinched himself and was once again certain that he was not dreaming. He had really arrived at the strange place.

He reached into his bosom and took out a few bottles that contained Scattering Dust. Then he quickly walked towards the fog. Before long, he arrived at the foot of the mountain and he went into the tunnel again.

He did not stop until he reached the stone door in the tunnel. As he looked at the familiar circle in the middle of the door and the 15 small holes there, Su Ming hesitated for a moment. Then he took a pill out from one of the bottles. With the pill between his fingers, he placed it into the very first hole on the door.

At the very moment his fingers touched the small hole on the door, Su Ming felt a faint pull coming from the hole and it sucked in the pill between his fingers.

Su Ming's became stern and alert. He was unsure if his judgment was correct and he did not know what would happen once he filled up all 15 holes. However he had envisioned this trip for a long time and a part of him was looking forward to it.

He did not act rashly. After the first hole absorbed the pill, Su Ming focused his attention on the door. Nothing happened.

Su Ming scratched his head. After a moment of thought, he took out another pill and placed it in the second hole. This continued until he placed the 15th pill into the last hole with much reluctance and nervousness.

'If there are still no changes even after I've placed 15 pills into the holes, all of this would be a waste...'

Su Ming watched the 15 holes anxiously. At that very moment, a gentle glow surfaced from the holes.

Su Ming immediately retreated excitedly. As the light surrounded the door and gradually grew brighter, the strings on the door came to life and moved slowly. After a while, they joined together and started to turn quickly like a vortex.

As they turned, the light from the 15 holes was slowly but surely sucked into the vortex, causing the door to be enveloped by a brilliant light. A roaring sound suddenly reverberated throughout the tunnel. The sound was so loud it could have made a

person deaf. It made Su Ming involuntarily manifest the 10 blood veins within his body. He felt the blood in his entire body boiling and he instinctively resisted the pull.

The roaring sound lasted for a few moments and green smoke emerged from the 15 holes. It was as if the pills had dissolved into smoke. As 15 puffs of smoke emerged from the holes, the gigantic stone door shook. A straight and narrow gap appeared all of a sudden at the center of the door.

As soon as the gap appeared, the two sides of the door slowly swung to the side. The door opened!

Su Ming's heart pounded against his chest. As he watched the scene unfold before him, he felt himself trembling in excitement. It was only after the door opened completely that Su Ming took in a sharp breath. There was no longer a tunnel behind the stone door but a small stone chamber.

The walls in the chamber were not smooth instead, they were filled with carvings. There was a large door that was tightly shut at the northern wall in the chamber.

On the ceiling of the chamber were some stones glowing faintly. They had fused into the walls of the chamber. There was a faint aroma in the chamber which could lift a person's spirits the moment they took a whiff of it.

Su Ming's eyes lit up with excitement but he still walked into the chamber carefully. He swept his gaze around the walls and saw that the style of the carvings on the walls was similar to the ones in the tunnel. They all featured men with messy hair creating medicinal pills in an ancient setting.

When Su Ming first arrived at the place, he was baffled by the drawings. However following the success of his own quenching of the herbs and the additional memories he gained, he could understand most of them when he saw the drawings again.

The figures on the drawings were creating different medicinal pills. As Su Ming observed the drawings, he could not help but be immersed in them. He verified each and every one of the drawings with his own experiences and forgot about the time as he obsessed over the drawings.

He would move quickly to search for the next carving once he finished observing one. He did not realize how much time had passed. When he finished looking at all the carvings, he still longed for more and he cast his gaze on the door within the chamber.

This door was slightly different from the first one. It was completely black and it gave off a nice aroma. It seemed like the materials used to build the door held some mysterious properties.

It also had a sort of heaviness to it. There was a drawing on the door too but it featured a gigantic cauldron. There were also wisps of smoke carved on top of it. It almost looked real. As Su Ming looked on, he had the impression that he was not looking at a drawing but at a real cauldron used for the quenching of herbs.

'If only I had a cauldron like this... '

Su Ming looked at the cauldron for a few more moments with envy.

Su Ming saw a number of different herbs on top and on both sides of the cauldron. He immediately felt himself quivering in excitement and paid full attention to the drawing. This was what he came here for, to find more recipes to create other medicinal pills.

To the left of the cauldron were seven herbs. Among the seven herbs, five of them were herbs needed to create Scattering Dust. As for the other two, Su Ming had never seen them before. After he carefully observed their features, Su Ming imprinted their image on his mind.

There were eight holes on the stone door arranged neatly, right underneath the recipe.

To the right of the cauldron were eight herbs. The recipe was slightly similar to the recipe on the left. Five of the herbs required were also the necessary ingredients for Scattering Dust.

When Su Ming saw the additional three ingredients necessary, his eyes lit up with joy. He knew two of the three herbs. They were just slightly rare.

There were also holes underneath this recipe but the number was slightly more than the recipe on the left. There were 12 holes underneath it.

When Su Ming looked at the recipe on the top of the cauldron, his face became grim. The ingredients to the recipe were not herbs. The drawing was of three things that would incite fear among those who saw them.

The first was the scales from the tail of a python, the second was the ninth leg from a Nine-Legged Spider and the third was the third finger from the right hand of a small black humanoid creature, the size of a palm.

Strangely, there were no holes underneath the third recipe. Perhaps, it was because the medicinal pill was too hard to create so it was not necessary to make it.

Su Ming fell silent momentarily. He walked towards the stone door and raised his right hand. Without any hesitation, he pressed his hand on the door and immediately, the drawing of the cauldron emitted a piercing light. It enveloped Su Ming's body.

After a moment of discomfort, foreign memories appeared once again in Su Ming's mind. He obtained the method to create the three medicinal pills and their names.

'South Asunder!' Su Ming looked at the drawing on the left of the cauldron, then turned his gaze to the right.

"Mountain Spirit... As for the last one... the Welcoming of Deities!" Su Ming looked at the strange recipe on top of the cauldron and mumbled.

As Su Ming thought about them, the light surrounding his body gradually dimmed along with the light from the cauldron on the stone door. Once the light completely disappeared, Su Ming's vision blurred but he was not nervous. He had already experienced this once. There was a strange whistling sound next to his ears. Once it was over, his vision slowly returned, and he found himself in his room within the tribe settlement.

Su Ming took a deep breath and walked towards the door immediately. He took away the chair and opened the door. It was still night time outside. The stars shone in the sky. It was quiet as the cold night wind blew past him.

However there was a faint silver light at the horizon, a clear sign that dawn was about to arrive.

'Looks like the difference in time between the two places is not too big... '

Su Ming closed the door behind him and sat down with his legs crossed again. He cupped his chin with his hands and began thinking.

'All three crafting methods are different for the three medicinal pills. I've never seen the two herbs required for Fire of the South so, I can ignore that for now. As for... the Welcoming of Deities... '

Su Ming narrowed his eyes.

'The ingredients required for this pill aren't herbs and the items are simply too strange. But what happens once the pill is created is really shocking! '

Su Ming remembered how the weather had changed when the person in his memories created the Welcoming of Deities. The sight of the wind and clouds traveling backwards and made his heart pound fiercely.

'The effects of the pill must be really shocking! But it's a pity... It's clear with the lack of holes on the stone door that the creation of this pill is extremely difficult... That's why it does not serve as a key to open the door. '

With some thought, Su Ming already guessed about half of the true story.

'Looks like the only thing I can create for now is Mountain Spirit. I know two of the three additional herbs... I may not have it now but there must be some in the tribe's herbal storage.'

As Su Ming continued thinking, light gradually filled the sky and a new day arrived.

He had not rested an entire night but Su Ming was not tired at all. The lack of fatigue became obvious when he reached the second level in the Blood Solidification Realm. It was as if he had obtained a huge amount of energy. Unless he went a few nights without sleep, he would not become tired.

As day arrived, the members of the tribe started busying themselves with work. Once Su Ming cleaned himself up, he walked towards a house made of grass not far away from his own house. It was surrounded by a fence which was constantly guarded by a few members of the tribe.

Chapter 20: Bei Ling

The wind in the morning was cold and with the winter, it felt like there were blades cutting through his skin as it blew past him. In spite of that, with the bonfire burning amid the tribe, a gentle warmth surrounded the entire tribe as it expelled the cold.

The circulation of Qi within their bodies allowed Berserkers to resist the cold but as most of the members of the tribe were normal people, most of them chose not to venture out during winter.

Even if they did go out, they would wear thick hides to fend against the cold. During the winter, common healers in the tribe would also be at their busiest. They had to create vast amounts of medication to increase the tribe members' immunity against the cold.

The elder would also activate the Qi in his body during the coldest days of the season to help the entire tribe last through the cold.

Su Ming wore a beast skin shirt that covered his entire body and trudged through the snow towards the tribe as he listened to the crunchy sounds from the snow under his feet. Looking at the familiar sights in his tribe and at the tribe members greeting him with smiles, it warmed his heart. It seemed to chase away the frigid winter cold.

The houses in the tribe were mostly simple in design. They were fine during the other seasons but they could not provide shelter against the wind during winter. They had to cover the walls of the houses with a large amount of hides to prevent the cold from entering their houses.

Sometimes, the hides would not stick to the walls for a long period of time and would require regular maintenance. The tribe members themselves also needed to add wood to the fires in their houses regularly. Hence, winter was torture for most of the tribe members.

At the very least, the cold did not kill them but it was still troublesome.

Su Ming arrived at the building constantly guarded by a few members of the tribe. It was the herbal storage for Dark Mountain Tribe. The walls of the building outside were covered by thick layers of hide. There were also several bonfires burning around the building. They allowed him to feel a layer of heat as he rode on the tails of the cold wind when he went near.

Su Ming was familiar with the place. Every single time he returned after collecting herbs, he would deliver all the herbs he collected there. So, when the guards saw Su Ming, they smiled and did not stop him.

Su Ming smiled back and greeted them as he went through the fence. Just as he was about to open the door and enter, a happy voice called out from behind.

"Su Ming, when did you come back?"

It was a girl's voice. It was pleasant to the ears and sounded just like the ringing of 100 bells.

Su Ming stopped and turned around. When he saw her, his gaze softened. The owner of the voice was a slightly big girl. She was covered entirely in thick hide and her long hair was tied together with a grass string. There were two exquisitely made bone earrings hanging off her ears. Her skin was a little rough but it did not hide her beauty.

Her eyes were big like giant puddles of water but they were clear, showing off her innocence. There was happiness in her eyes as she walked briskly towards Su Ming.

"I came back yesterday." Su Ming smiled. She was the person who cleaned his house regularly when he was away - Chen Xin. Suddenly, Su Ming froze on as he looked behind her.

She was not alone. There was a young man in his late teens following her. The young man was big in build and he looked even sturdier than Lei Chen. He only wore a thin beast skin shirt in the winter. His hair was messy but not dirty. His sharp jaw line gave him a prideful air.

His eyes especially, looked like stars. It was as though something strange shone from within his eyes. He gave off an oppressive air and kept others on edge when they were around him. He was like a wild beast.

He stood there with a huge bow slung across his back. His gaze felt like arrows as he looked at Su Ming.

"Su Ming!"

"Bei... Bei Ling..." Su Ming looked at the young man and spoke respectfully as a complicated look flitted through his eyes.

The young man before him was the strongest among their generation in the Dark Mountain Tribe. Even the elder mentioned that he could not hope to win against the talent that he had. Lei Chen was the only one who could somewhat compete against him after he Awakened.

As the strongest of the younger generation in the tribe, the speed of his training was incredibly fast. Su Ming once overheard the elder saying that he was the one who held the most promise to break through the Blood Solidification Realm and become one of the few to reach the legendary Transcendence Realm!

His name also was also known throughout the other tribes around them. Even Wind Stream Tribe had heard of him and they sent messengers to take him away to be trained in their tribe. Su Ming did not expect to see him.

His feelings towards Bei Ling were complicated because when he was young, Bei Ling had taken care of him like an older brother. Even his skills with the bow were taught by Bei Ling. Bei Ling was after all, the head of all the children in the tribe. His archery skills were no laughing matter.

However all of this changed when Chen Xin was 12 years old. Perhaps it was because Chen Xin and Su Ming were too close. Bei Ling started looking at Su Ming oddly and suspiciously. His looks became cold and distant later on. Bei Ling even chose to ignore him when they met.

It was not until much later when Su Ming learned that the tribe leader and Bei Ling's father had already made arrangements for Chen Xin and Bei Ling to be engaged...

Su Ming wanted to explain himself but his words were rewarded with a cold look. Eventually, he could only sigh regretfully and started distancing himself from Chen Xin.

He understood his own position. He knew that he was only a normal member of the tribe. He also knew that if it were not for the elder, he may not have even been accepted into the tribe.

Su Ming was an abandoned baby whom the elder adopted when he went out on a journey dozens of years ago. The members of the tribe were kind towards him but it did not change the fact that he did not belong.

"Why didn't you tell me you came back? I went to look for you a few times but you weren't there." Chen Xin scrunched up her nose and complained.

Su Ming touched his nose and avoided Chen Xin's gaze. He only treated Chen Xin as a sister and harbored no other feelings for her. He did not want Bei Ling, who had been kind towards him to continue misunderstanding.

"Bei Ling, when did you come back?" Su Ming looked towards Bei Ling, who exuded a powerful air. He could feel an endless amount of Qi coming from Bei Ling's body. The strength of his Qi was the strongest he had seen after the elder and the leaders in the tribe.

The fierce pride he felt from the other was also as strong as his Qi. It made Su Ming feel like suffocating just by standing before him.

"Yesterday." Bei Ling's gaze was as usual. It was cold and he spoke little like he wanted it done and over with quickly. He turned and looked towards Chen Xin standing by his side.

"Xin, didn't you want to collect some herbs for your mother? Let's go." As Bei Ling spoke, he held Chen Xin's hand and walked past Su Ming. Then he pushed the door to the herbal storage open and went in.

Chen Xin wanted to say something but after a brief moment of hesitation, she chose not to. Instead, she nodded at Su Ming and followed Bei Ling into the building.

Su Ming stood there silently. After a while, he sighed and went in as well.